

# Grizzly or Black?

There are four main physical differences between black and grizzly bears: body shape, face, claws, and tooth length. The first three characteristics can be observed from a distance. The fourth requires close investigation.

- Adult grizzlies generally have a hump between their front shoulders, black bears do not. When walking on all fours, the highest point of a black bear's body is its rump; on a grizzly, the highest point is between the front shoulders.
- Adult grizzlies have a dished face profile. Adult black bears have a straight face profile, sometimes called a Roman nose.
- The claws on the front foot of an adult grizzly are 2 to 4 inches long and make excellent digging tools. They are rarely less than 1-3/4 inches long. The claws on black bears are seldom longer than 1-1/2 inches. The shorter claws make for better climbing, but they are not as efficient as a grizzly's for digging.
- The last major difference between the two bear species lies in the mouth, though it's a spot few people want to inspect. A black bear's last upper molar measures less than 1-1/8 inches long, whereas the same tooth in a grizzly's mouth is longer than 1-1/8 inches.

